

**In the Claims:**

1.(previously presented) A method of preparing a solution of menthyl lactate, wherein the final concentration of menthyl lactate is higher than that achievable by dissolving menthyl lactate in a neat solvent, by:

liquefying menthyl lactate; and

combining the liquefied menthyl lactate with menthol carboxamide and the solvent.

2.(original) A method according to claim 1, in which the menthol carboxamide is added to the liquefied menthyl lactate and this liquid mixture is then dissolved in the solvent.

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3.(original) A method according to claim 1, in which the menthol carboxamide is first dissolved in the solvent, and this solution is then mixed with the liquefied menthyl lactate.

4.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.

5.(currently amended) A solution prepared by the method of claim 1, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.

6.(currently amended) A solution consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent, characterized in that the final concentration of menthyl lactate is higher than that achievable by dissolving menthyl lactate alone in the solvent.

- 7.(previously presented) A solution according to claim 5 wherein the solvent is propylene glycol.
- 8.(original) A solution according to claim 7 wherein the propylene glycol is present in amounts of 25% to 30% by weight of the total solution.
- 9.(previously presented) A solution according to claim 5 wherein the menthyl lactate is present in amounts of from 50% to 60% by weight of the total solution.
- 10.(previously presented) A solution according to claim 5 wherein the menthol carboxamide is present in amounts of from 10% to 20% by weight of the total solution.
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- 11.(previously presented) A food or oral care or cosmetic composition comprising a solution according to claim 5.
- 12.(previously presented) A method of improving the solubility of menthyl lactate comprising the steps of:  
liquefying menthyl lactate; and  
combining the liquefied menthyl lactate with menthol carboxamide and the solvent.
- 13.(currently amended) A solution consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.
- 14.(previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.

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15.(previously presented) A method according to claim 3 wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of octyldodecanol, dipropylene glycol, propylene glycol, triglyceride, isopropyl myristate, olive oil, almond oil, hexyl laurate and alcohol.

16.(currently amended) A solution prepared by the method of claim 2, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.

17.(currently amended) A solution prepared by the method of claim 3, consisting essentially of menthyl lactate and menthol carboxamide dissolved in a solvent.

18.(previously presented) A solution according to claim 6 wherein the solvent is propylene glycol.

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